

REMARKS

Claims 15 and 26 were amended to include the feature that the contact fingers are arranged to extend behind the support. These amendments are supported by Figs. 5 and 6.

With regard to the prior art cited by the Examiner, the apparatus of U.S. Patent No. 2,737,631 to Beck and U.S. Patent No. 3,581,190 to Brown have contact fingers that extend in front of the movable wall and protrude into the cavity. This alters the cavity volume and the shape of the cavity internal surface, thus adversely affecting the tuning of the apparatus. In contrast, since the contact fingers of the present invention extend behind the support, the volume and internal shape of the cavity remains unaffected, resulting in greater accuracy of tuning.

In view of the above arguments, the applicants believe that the invention defined in independent claims 15 and 26 is both novel and non-obvious. Since the remaining claims are all dependent on either claim 15 or 26, it is submitted that these claims should also be allowable.

As for the non-applied art, it will be appreciated that the present invention requires the contact fingers to be formed integrally with a conductive contact plate which is attached to a support. This feature allows for the technique of manufacturing the contact fingers separately from the support structure, providing the advantage of ease of manufacture, and allowing processes such as photo-etching to be used (see page 4 of the present description). The invention also requires the conductive plate to be an active surface during use.

United Kingdom Patent No. 2,140,976 describes an apparatus having spring blades which are formed integrally with plate 3b. However, this plate faces the field-free space rather than the high frequency field. The spring blades are not, therefore, formed integrally with a conductive plate being an *active* surface during use. Also, there is no suggestion of manufacturing the

component incorporating the blades as a small lightweight component that can be photo-etched and then affixed to a more substantial support.

U.S. Patent No. 2,428,287 to Linder does not disclose an apparatus having contact fingers that are integral with an electrical conductive plate being an active surface during use. The pressure springs 11 only act to expand the U-shaped contact member 6 and do not perform the function of contact fingers as understood in the present application. Nor are the pressure springs formed integrally with any component that does form an active surface during use.

Allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.

Also enclosed are English translations of French Patent No. 2,451,111 and Germany Patent No. 940364 cited in the Information Disclosure Statement dated July 30, 2002.

Petition is hereby made for a three-month extension of the period to respond to the outstanding Official Action to May 4, 2004. A check in the amount of \$950.00, as the Petition fee, is enclosed herewith. If there are any additional charges, or any overpayment, in connection with the filing of the amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any such deficiency, or credit any such overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 11-1145.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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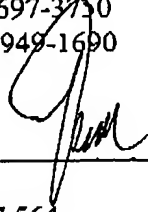
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